



THE
Dolly
Madison
spoons in the White

House are safe, and the report that they had been melted down by Mrs. Cleveland's orders was simply a post-campaign report. It was only a condemned gravy boat of no account or historical value that went into the pot. So let the lover of relics and Dolly Madison silver spoons breathe easier.

The circular mahogany table in the White House dining room, set for a meal, is an historical study. The dishes, knives, forks, etc., are memorials of a dozen Administrations, perhaps. The President drinks his coffee out of a Harrison cup, which would be considered a gem by any connoisseur in the ceramic art. It is a generous cup as to size, with ornamentation in blue and a gilt rim inside. When he finishes the contents he sees on the bottom an eagle with a shield and scroll, the latter bearing the words, "E Pluribus Unum." The design is the arms of the United States.

The Major's wife suggests another cup, and she is nothing loath. Two lumps of sugar and a little cream are added, and he stirs the mixture with a gold spoon that was bought by Mr. Van Buren. There are three sizes of these spoons, which, by the way, gave rise to considerable scandal in a political campaign when Mr. Van Buren was in the White House. The idea of the President's using tableware of gold was offensive to the proletariat; but the charges made were very unjust, inasmuch as the spoons were of silver and merely gold-plated. The spoons are turning white now, owing to much wear.

Mrs. McKinley has the use of fourteen dozen knives, the best of them with handles of mother-of-pearl; but, though very pretty, these pearl-handled knives are only plated. Of forks, on the other hand, she has twenty-four dozen, and all of them are of solid silver. They are exquisite in design—very slender just above the branching of the tines and expanding into a graceful

On the handle of the table spoons the words "President's House" are inscribed. There is no other ornamentation, but, simple as the design, any collector would pay a big price for the little instrument, which is one of the spoons bought by Dolly Madison when she quipped it in the Executive Mansion. Notwithstanding frequent statements to the contrary, there is no tableware of gold in the White House; but the metal service used by the President

dent and his family is all of sterling silver, barring the pearl-handled knives. Quite a lot of plated forks and spoons are made to serve at state dinners, the private equipment being not sufficient to go around. The old Lincoln plates have a blue border, in which are gilt stars, of the number of States composing the Union. In the middle of the plate is the eagle and scroll. Because there are not enough pieces left for public occasions, and also for the sake of preserving what remains, the Lincoln and Grant sets of china are reserved for use on President McKinley's private table. The Grant plates have a yellow border and a floral design for a centre.

In old times silverware and crockery were bought for the White House as they were needed, and comparatively little attention was paid to making them of china and silverware uniform. This fact struck Mrs. Harrison when she became mistress of the Executive Mansion. She made up her mind that something ought to be done to make the tableware an appropriation from Congress, and she ordered a set of china, which she imported from France.

One of the most highly prized appurtenances of the White House is a mirror which customarily adorns the table at state dinners. It is made in sections, so as to be adaptable for a board of any size up to one accommodating thirty-eight guests. It was bought in France by Dolly Madison. Then there is a boat of silver four feet long, which was purchased by Mrs. U. S. Grant at the Centennial Exposition of 1876. It is a sort of idealized gondola, with the addition of a silver mast and a silver sail. In the stern of the craft is the figure of an Indian, and an accompanying inscription reads: "All alone went Hiawatha through the clear, transparent water." The boat is set on a base of silver, and there are a number of silver ornaments, detachable from it for the sake of easy cleaning. Guests at state dinners have stolen some of these ornaments, and so now the boat is secluded from kelpomania in the private dining-room of the President, where it adorns a sideboard.

A considerable part of the silver service in use to-day at the White House was bought when Mr. Monroe was President. There are dozens of massive pitchers, trays, gravy-boats, etc., which, melted down, would fetch a pretty sum. And the other day a couple of dozens of small forks were given over to be melted because they were unshapely.

